



OUTPLACEMENT SERVICES IN SUPPORT OF BRAC AND COMPETITIVE SOURCING

Problem:

The Department of Defense is expected to implement another round of Base Realignment and Closures (BRAC) in 2005. In support of these anticipated BRAC actions, the Department had a keen interest in reducing the negative impact on civilian employees whose jobs may be eliminated. DoD had no centralized coordination of outplacement services to help employees find new jobs and/or transition to alternate careers. Rather, outplacement assistance had been left up to base commanders and supported by funding diverted from other activities, resulting in a mixed record of outplacement success related to BRAC actions. In response, the Department desired insight into the best practices and lessons learned from the private sector that could inform current programs and lead to better services for impacted employees.

Response:

The Defense Business Board (DBB) was formally tasked by the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) in January, 2003, to explore best practices used in the private sector to partner with outplacement firms, particularly as those practices related to large-scale plant and facility closures, community partnering for retraining, and alternative employment strategies. The ultimate objective of such partnering was to improve the Department's ability to "do the right thing" for displaced employees. In developing its recommendations, the DBB Task Group became familiar with private sector practices for effective employee transition assistance as well as current and past practices for providing employee transition assistance in cases of base closings, competitive sourcing and military downsizing across DoD.

Recommendations:

The Board recommended DoD develop broad partnering relationships with private outplacement firms rather than rely on internal resources. Further, the Board advised DoD to prioritize and centralize the provision of career transition assistance for civilian employees impacted by BRAC and competitive sourcing actions by establishing a formal Career Transition Assistance Program (CTAP) under the office of Civilian Personnel Management Service. Specific details of the program may be found in the DBB Report FY03-5 available at www.dod.mil/dbb. Key elements include:

- Comprehensive communications strategy
- Community partnering
- Outplacement services
- Retraining
- Job Placement
- Financial planning
- Creative solutions for severance, benefits, retirement
- Priority placement strategy
- Morale and family assistance
- Active measurement of outsourced provider performance and overall program effectiveness

Action:

In October of 2003 the recommendations were endorsed by the Senior Executive Council and referred to the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics) for implementation and incorporation into broader communications about BRAC beginning in the spring of 2004.